

GORE GAZETTE

FREE Your Bi-Weekly Guide To Horror, Exploitation And Gore In The N.Y. Metro Area No. 20

THE RISE AND FALL OF KURT EASTWOOD

These past two weeks have been rather hectic ones for me, and since the gore/exploitation draught of last issue seems to have subsided, I did not have enough time to cover every new release of the last two weeks. One I missed was John Carpenter's Escape From New York. Luckily, G.G. fan and humorist Mark Nardone caught it on its first day of release and supplied the following review:

The first half-hour of John Carpenter's latest is very promising. G.G. readers know the Escape From New York storyline by now and its one that exudes endlessly exciting possibilities. Disney-graduate Kurt Russell is a commanding presence as anti-hero Snake Plissken; and seeing him opposite James Lee Van Cleef its hard not to picture him as a rejuvenated Clint Eastwood. But the character of Snake could have been much more than an eyepatch, a breathy voice, and cast-iron personality. Not even the sultry Adrienne Barbeau can arouse an atom of humanity or desire in Plissken. To say, Escape takes a slow but sure nosedive into dullness. Major plot points, questionable at first, become downright silly after a minute of logical thought. The typical N.Y. cabbie, played here by a sadly befuddled-looking Ernest Borgnine, couldn't make sense in The Twilight Zone. His only role in Escape is that he, like all other people in the film are at best merely dimensional cartoon characters. This being the case, Carpenter tries to fill the gaps with action and violence. But the gore is nothing new and its pretty tame as well: an insert of the President Of the U.S.'s severed finger, a head whacked from behind by a spiked bat, a pool of blood streaming down Ms. Barbeau's cleavage, a Phantasm-like orb shot into a mercenary's skull and not much more. I left Escape From New York thinking how good a film this could have been. Like Tobe Hooper, John Carpenter is becoming increasingly more disappointing as he gets sucked into the mainstream of big business cinema. The most we can hope for is that they'll do an improved remake in 15 years starring Ricky Schroder as the new "Snake"...



"WHAT DO YOU MEAN CLINT EASTWOOD WAS TOUGHER THAN ME?", SCREAMS AN ANGRY KURT RUSSELL AS HE STRANGLES AN AGING LEE VAN CLEEF IN JOHN CARPENTER'S ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK.

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Note: I finally caught up with EFNY just as we are going to press, and I disagree somewhat with Mr. Nardone. EFNY is a thrill-packed exciting action epic that unfolds exactly like a comic book (ala David Cronenberg's Scanners). The plot inconsistencies and shallow characterizations are soon forgotten once the action is in high gear, with Carpenter never handling suspense better. The gore effects, although slim, are very realistic-looking and well worth catching. My main complaints with EFNY were that (as Mark stated) Russell as Snake is so much of an Eastwood clone that it borders on the comical and also that the special effects and miniature work on many scenes are very fake looking and seemed a throwback to the days of Dark Star. In short, EFNY is an excellent escapist film and is definitely an improvement over last year's loser, The Fog. Catch it and decide for yourself...)

THE WILD KINGDOM ANIMAL MASSACRE

After being teased with trailers for the better part of two months at various Times Square venues, the eagerly-awaited Savage Man, Savage Beast finally reared its head last week at the Liberty

beater. Touted as being one of the most violent films ever made, Savage is an odd Mexican documentary concoction that crosses the non-stop shock format of the 1960's Mondo Cane films with the clarity and precision of the Wild Kingdom television show. Basically, the film is a field day for those who get off on animal mutilations, as for over 1 1/2 hours, the viewer is treated to scenes after scene of various creatures getting their heads blown/lopped off, speared, carved up, or merely ripping each other's entrails out in any of the flick's numerous graphic fight sequences. Added to all this is a soundtrack featuring a swarthy Latino narrator rambling endlessly on with a heavy-lidded, meaningless soliloquy about the inherent violent nature common to both man and beast and we can get some idea of just how tedious and boring Savage becomes. At the outset, the film is quite sick, disgustingly gory, and very entertaining- it is almost what Wild Kingdom would look like if they replaced Marlin Perkins with Kerachell Gordon Lewis as head buana. But about 15 minutes later, after the umpteenth kangaroo has gotten its guts sprayed all over the screen by an Australian bushman's flying spear, the film loses its shock appeal and becomes repellant by virtue of its own complacency. Savage occasionally breaks the monotony by showing us something really depraved such as an on-screen graphic castration and a tribe of young cannibals eating their own dead father, but these nifty tidbits come few and far between. Severely flawed by its shaky plotting and devices, Savage emerges as being vastly inferior to even The Last Survivor (aka Carnivore), a comparable flick that had far less gore but a much meatier storyline. Savage Man, Savage Act can be recommended to animal abusers only.

FOR THE DEPRAVED ONLY...

Surprisingly enough, it seems that a large amount of G.C. readers are into twisted exploitation and judging from the amount of favorable mail received on the notorious I Spit On Your Grave. Well, all the demented masses who enjoyed that sick little production, Barbed Wire Dolls (now on a double bill with Savage Man, Savage Beast at the Liberty) will be right up your alley. Made in 1978, the intrepid Jess Franco, (known to gore fans for sleaze classics like Succubus and Night Of The Blood Monster, among countless others) the film is an Italian production dubbed in English concerning a brutal women's prison where S & M punishment and torture of inmates is commonplace, though virtually goreless. Dolls contains enough bondage, beatings, humiliation, rape and sexual perversion to make the aforementioned Spit look pale by comparison. Someone should put old per Ebert on to this flick - since he so openly loathes the degrading treatment of women in torture films, this one would really get his howl! Production value of the film is strictly low: the script is mindless and plodding, the direction of "Zoom Lens" Franco is embarrassing to say the least and the sound booms like bombs recorded in a subway lavatory. But if you are a movie viewer who enjoys seeing lesbian assaults on innocent nubile, incestuous rape, forced feeding of a dead rodent to a young soner, and a myriad of other lurid acts and odd situations, Barbed Wire Dolls is tailor made for your unnatural desires. An interesting note: the film was produced by none other than the infamous Harry Alan Towers, who has since been convicted and imprisoned on various counts of fraud and perjury.

PARTS: A LOW-BUDGET TRIUMPH

The past fortnight has yielded yet another obscure horror flick: Parts: The Clonus Horror at a week's run at the lovely Lyric Theater on 14th St. last week. Made in late 1978 on a shoestring

budget reportedly under \$30,000, Parts spins the tale of a government-sponsored clone farm where duplicates of important politicians and industrial magnates are reared for spare body organs in order to allow the clones to achieve immortality. The clones are purposely bred to be mentally defective so that they can be easily controlled and don't get wise to their ultimate fate. One clone emerges as being not so retarded as he looks and he escapes the farm to try and tell the world about the "clonus horror". I realize the plot sounds rather trite and contrived, but director Robert Fiveson keeps the film roaring along at a breakneck pace, never giving the viewer enough time to ponder the story's shaky credibility. Although the gore effects are very sparse, those that are seen are extremely effective (i.e., a frontal lobotomy is given to a female clone with an instrument that looks like a power drill with a buzz saw on the end of it- it slices neatly through her skull, sending bits of bone, meat and blood flying everywhere). But perhaps the most effective scenes in the film are those which take place in the clone storage area. Hundreds of "dead" clone bodies covered in plastic bags hang naked from the ceiling of a large refrigeration area in scenes so hauntingly chilling that you'll be thinking about them for days. Parts: The Clonus Horror is an exciting and chilling little low budgeter that should be of interest to both horror fans and staunch sci-fi enthusiasts.



ALTERNATE TITLE AD
ART FOR PARTS: THE
CLONUS HORROR.